

Tuesday, August 12, 2003

## EDITORIAL

### Editorial staff shakes ass to downloads

There's been a lot of talk about the trading of songs online, what with the Recording Industry Association of America's recent attempts to subpoena Boston College and Massachusetts Institute of Technology for students' names.

RIAA has gone on a rampage, seeking more than 900 subpoenas to help identify Internet service providers or individuals illegally swapping copyrighted material on the Web. A ruling that disallows requests from out of state slightly stalled the latest attempts, but RIAA will soon file the proper paperwork and will probably win access to those involved in the online trading.

It's not coincidence that college students are under attack by the RIAA, either; students across the country have access to the latest in technology and are often plugged in to the fastest networks. Furthermore, students are able to find just what they're looking for — whether it's DMB or Nelly's "Shake Your Tailfeather" (Boy, it's catchy, isn't it?).

It's easy. Point. Click. Wait about 10 seconds if it's a fast connection, a few minutes if it's not ("We can even do it slow / Oh, oh ..."). And there it is: musical bliss.

Beyond the simplicity of online file sharing, though, is a key component that contributes to the phenomenon: students' mentalities.

People well into their 70s are becoming increasingly computer-savvy, but those who use programs like Kazaa and Morpheus are 50 years their junior. There's something about our generation that makes us prone to thinking we can have anything we want. Perhaps it is because our baby boomer parents indulged us with all they didn't have, or perhaps we're just spoiled brats. In any event, we seem to think swapping — or stealing, technically — is just fine and dandy.

Some of us will admit that file sharing is theft but will quickly counter that it's OK. The recording industry is, after all, evil. Musical stars, too, have quite enough money, so they don't mind. Maybe the best one, though, is the argument that the Internet is here for the expression of free thought — and by all means MP3s certainly fit that criterion.

Perhaps the recording industry is malicious. Today, don't you almost feel lucky to pick up a CD on sale for \$14.99? After all, the suggested retail price seems to linger somewhere around \$18.

Conversely, record sales are declining. Many say this slump has nothing to do with online trading; it's purely happenstance. Equally as coincidental as, say, Milli Vanilli losing all respectability after being shown for what they really were: two lookers with locks who couldn't sing a lick (but they sure could dance).

What college students don't understand is that downloading songs off the Internet is the same as walking into the local record store and lifting a couple of CDs. Music is intellectual property, and taking it without paying for it is theft. Yeah, maybe rock stars have a lot of money, but they damn well deserve it, as does anyone who makes and sells something.

Really, though, us college kids are going to do what we want. Downloading songs from the Net isn't the most serious of crimes, and hey, as long as we're not the one who are sharing — ironically, it's OK to steal, just not to share — we're safe for now.

So download away; we're downloading\* "Tailfeather" right now so we can seductively swivel our collective asses after we finish the paper.

But just remember, in a few years it might not be Nelly saying "What your name is / Where you from?" It could be the RIAA knocking at your door. Odds are, they don't keep the same beat, either.

\* Editor's note: No songs were illegally shared during the composition of this editorial.

## EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

## Funding cuts hurt students, economy

It is no secret that I want to be a grandfather someday. However, both my children, one approaching college graduation and the other an adult, show little interest in the prospect any time soon.

Most young adults these days do not settle down and start a family soon after college. Yet, 35 years ago when I graduated college, most did.

One of the reasons for this difference is simple, and we're dealing with it right now in the legislature: the cost of college.

In recent years the cost of college has skyrocketed all over the country. Oregon is no exception. If the proposed budget passes, college students in Oregon will face a shocking tuition hike of 21 percent. This is because the proposed budget decreases state support from more than \$5,000 per student to about \$3,700 per student. That's a 12.7 percent decrease in state funding from just two years ago.

Tuition hikes mean young Oregonians who attend a state university will face a tremendous financial liability, and will be saddled with an average \$20,000 worth of debt at graduation. This debt means young people — who could be thinking of buying their first home, marrying, and starting a family — will instead be living very carefully and paying off debt.

Cutting funds also decreases access to a college degree. For every \$100 that tuition goes up, 0.7

percent of young Oregonians are priced out of an education. With the proposed tuition hikes in this budget, 10,000 qualified students will be denied a college degree. This means 10,000 young people will be denied an important tool for earning money and raising a family.

Yet, last year, before tuition hikes, enrollment grew 10.5 percent. This year, the co-chairs' proposed higher education budget means that fewer new faculty will join state colleges to teach these new students. The teacher-to-student ratio will increase by 6 percent and student services and course offerings will also drop. Oregon's college

students are paying more for less.

It's worth noting that having many indebted young adults causes an economic drag, at a time when Oregon's economy is already sputtering. Our colleges also serve as engines for economic development, and, for individual towns, a local university or community college can form the anchor of the local economy.

So, how, or rather, when should

young Oregonians pay for college? They can't do it before they go to college when they have no money, and they shouldn't do it afterwards by paying down debt. Rather, they should pay for college later in life, when they are finally in their prime earning years, through paying taxes. By doing so, they ensure the generation following them will have access to higher education. When that following generation matures, they pay for the generation following them, and so forth.

This is the responsibility my generation — which got very low tuition rates when we were young — neglects whenever we cut funding for colleges.

We are asking today's students to pay now, when they are least able to do so. They take many extra years to graduate as they work their way through in low-paying jobs, or they incur crushing debt that must be repaid in their low-earning early career years.

This is not a good way to run a society, and it's not a good policy for grandpa wannabes. We can and must do better for our young adults.

Phil Barnhart, D-Central Lane and Linn counties, is a member of the Oregon House

## Higher Education

KRT

## Higher GPA standards deny opportunities

The University raised the GPA requirements to 3.25 based on the decision of the Oregon University System Strategic Planning Committee. My concern is that this policy is going to deny hundreds if not thousands of Oregon residents the chance to be educated at the state's flagship institution of higher education, the University of Oregon.

I entered the University with a 2.75 GPA from Portland Community College. Without the chance to have experienced what I learned at the University, there wouldn't be nearly as many open doors for me now

that I have graduated.

There are hundreds if not thousands of out-of-state and international student on the campus who are NOT Oregonians. As the University population is maxed out at capacity, how many high school graduate and resident students will be left out in favor of cream-of-the-crop out-of-state students (who pay an additional \$10,000 a year).

Under this new policy, I would never have been able to complete the dream of having a "Duck Degree." The scholarly lessons, social intelligence and negotiation skills I learned at the University are very powerful, and they will help me immensely in the future.

If OUS is concerned about over-capac-

ity of the University, perhaps it could use a first come, first served quota system, rather than a restrictive, higher GPA to weed out students. There are many other issues that affect GPA performance away from pure academic concentration. Situations such as young single parents working full or part time and students with unsupportive parental interest may affect a student's ability to perform such an elevated standard.

My question to OUS is this: Is the intention of such policy to make the University for the people of this state, or is the University becoming the University of California at Oregon, or the University of Asia, Oregon campus?

Mark Nelsen, a 2003 graduate, lives in Aloha.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### City should consider safety in bus project

Before the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) removes the median and trees down the middle of Franklin Boulevard, will the city and Lane Transit District first hold a community forum on how pedestrians and bicycles will be safely accommodated?

There is a pre-existing problem of conflicts between pedestrians and cars along

Franklin Boulevard, especially at the intersection of Onyx Street where students have been seriously injured.

While the city is busy studying nodes, could it be missing the wider picture by not seeing how the freeway-like Franklin Boulevard BRT plans will drastically sever connectivity between neighborhoods?

Allowing for a design that would preserve the entire median would let LTD avoid compounding the pedestrian and bicycle safety problems. Outside the new

Lillis Business Complex, University planners have installed what they refer to as a "pedestrian refuge" on East 13th Avenue, in the middle of the street. It would be wise if these planners could see past the core of campus and to its edge, where along Franklin Boulevard a very useful pedestrian refuge faces removal.

Bryn Anderson

sophomore  
 environmental science  
 University OSPIRG Willamette Coordinator

## ONLINE POLL

Each week, the Emerald publishes the previous week's poll results and the coming week's poll question. Visit www.dailyemerald.com to vote.

**Last week:** What's the worst movie of the summer?

**Results:** 50 total votes

"Gigli" — 50 percent, or 25 votes

"Dumb and Dumber: When Harry met Lloyd" — 18 percent, or 9 votes

Leave me alone! — 12 percent, or 6 votes

"The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen" — 8 percent, or 4 votes

"Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle" — 6 percent, or 3 votes

"Spy Kids 3-D: Game Over" —

6 percent, or 3 votes

**This week:** How do you feel about gays being in positions of religious authority?

**Choices:** It's a positive step in the right direction; It's the same as a straight person in the position; Military mentality — don't ask, don't tell; It's outrageous, and I quit going to church; God will have his day with them; Leave me alone!